

Vision 2025 Committee Meeting

November 16, 2006

Review public comments from last meeting.

Monty Wedel clarified language that was in the 1988 Urban Area Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Wedel explained that although the 2003 Manhattan Urban Area Comprehensive Plan covered the majority of the older plan's study area, there were some areas of the County, outside of the City limits, of which the 1988 Plan was still applicable. Monty asked the committee if there were any questions.

Jan Lyons asked if the comments from the public were being submitted by committee members or the general public.

Mr. Wedel spoke of the website and mentioned some information could be added to the website to improve the distribution of information.

There was a suggestion to place contact information of the individual committee members on the website.

Vinton Visser suggested that a moratorium on development be put into place as an interim solution to the 20-acre splits.

Terrie McCants reviewed the Committee Agenda for the evening, reviewed the ground rules with the committee and reviewed the original "charge" of the committee.

Charlie Griffin, facilitator, asked the committee to review the articles assigned for reading. The committee submitted the following observations:

- 1) It was a bold move to raise money for the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR). Could Riley County do such a thing?
- 2) Most of the successful programs were voluntary.
- 3) The cost for PDR was projected to be less than the cost of new infrastructure for new development.
- 4) The density of development required by cities has a direct impact on how much land is consumed by development.
- 5) If a PDR program was in place in Kansas, it could be done less expensively than in other places.
- 6) In order for a PDR program to be successful, money would need to be raised for education of property owners, farmers, etc.
- 7) The PDR program would need to focus on certain areas with a contiguous approach, rather than fragmenting areas.
- 8) Development can adversely impact the profitability of agricultural operations. Where do we draw the line on incremental development?
- 9) The problem is nation-wide. Some solutions have involved the use of referendums.

- 10) There should be an Agricultural Review Committee to screen all development proposals.

A suggestion was made stating that it is important to decide what is considered farmland and what is not.

Another suggestion was to seek a balance between regulation and voluntary participation to preserve/protect farmland.

Terrie McCants reviewed the major issues to be addressed by the Committee for the evening and noted that they were bulleted in their packets.

The Committee broke out into smaller groups.

Question #1: Define agriculture.

Comments:

- Land which is farmed, traditionally or non-traditionally, used for pasturing or other agricultural uses and undeveloped or not used for urban uses.
- Management of land for the production of food and fiber.
- Separate definitions of prime agricultural soil, grasslands, pasture land and hobby farming.
- The management of land, tracts greater than 20 acres, for the production of food, fiber and livestock.
- Land actively used for the production of agricultural commodities.

Question #2: What attributes of agriculture land warrant the greatest protection? Are all agricultural lands equal?

Comments:

- All ag lands are not created equal.
- Islands of development vs. islands of prime ag soil.
- Location in County; it is different in the northern portion of the County than in the southern portion of the County.
- Proximity to existing development.
- The total area must be included in the consideration, rather than just soil type or pasture land.
- Preserving grasslands and the management of ag land
- How the land is being used (i.e. personal or commercial farming). Is the value of the land being assessed strictly on soil type or on economic reasons? Is the land in question near a city? Does the size of the tract of land matter?
- Compatibility with surrounding uses.
- Conservation on existing tract.
- Minimal impact on existing tract.
- Evaluate existing attributes:

- CAFO's
- Bottom land/creek bottoms
- Uplands
- Ridgelines
- Availability of water

Monty Wedel stated that the Committee must base these attributes/restrictions on some factual rationale.

Comment: The County and City should locate certain areas for development; should be focused

Mr. Wedel explained the difference in the process used to complete the 2003 Manhattan Urban Area Plan, as opposed to this process. He stated that within that Plan, the preservation of ag lands was de-emphasized. Conversely, the emphasis of the Riley County Comprehensive Plan update is to focus on the preservation/protection of ag lands/operations.

There was a suggestion to bring the Tier Map to the next meeting to show the location of prime soils, grasslands, existing development, etc.

Comment: The productivity of land should not be used in determining the value of ag land.

Comment: The management of land should be focused upon.

Monty Wedel explained that the BOCC suggested that there should be more publicity for the Committee meetings. Some suggestions were made including the following:

- An ad following the obituaries in the Mercury.
- KMAN radio "In Focus".
- An ad in the Manhattan Mercury

Comment: The committee needs to set up a regular monthly meeting schedule. The group decided that the third Thursday of every month seemed to work out well.

Next meeting: January 18, 2007 at 7:30 PM, Fire station Headquarters.

Meeting adjourned.